

God of great mercy and grace who will pardon all our sin when we come to him in repentance and faith.

THE CENTRE OF THE BIBLE

What is the shortest chapter in the Bible? (Answer -Psalm 117)

What is the longest chapter in the Bible? (Answer - Psalm 119)

Which chapter is in the centre of the Bible? (Answer - Psalm 118)

Fact: There are 594 chapters before Psalm 118.

Fact: there are 594 chapters after Psalm 118.

Add these numbers up, and you get 1188.

What is the centre verse of the Bible? (Answer - Psalm 118:8)

It may seem strange how this worked out, but was God at the centre of it?

Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives? The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives, and that they want to be in the centre of His will, just refer them to the centre of His Word!

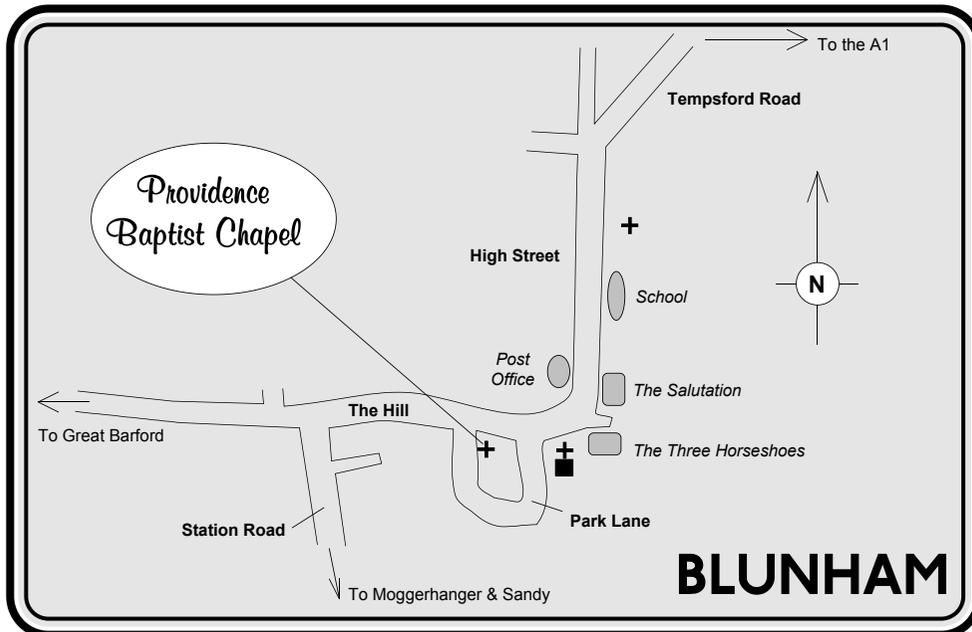
Psalm 118 verse 8 - 'It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.'

Times of Services:

Sunday Morning 10:30 am

Sunday Evening 6:00 pm

Week evening (Friday) 7:00 pm



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First Steps

June 2001

No.7

Warm greetings to you all on behalf of Providence Chapel.

How time seems to just fly by. No doubt we will be thinking about holidays as the weather gets more sunny; the opportunity to 'take a break' and get away from it all is a welcome prospect, but we have to come back home again to the daily routine, the same as it was before.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to you all to our services at the chapel to hear the gospel message about Jesus. Jesus said 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest'. Yes, He is still alive today and we can tell Him about everything, and He can help us. Tell Jesus when life's burdens are too great for you to bear. Go lay it at His feet and know that He will care. His human heart is still the same today as yesterday. 'And in His love I find my rest, and in His strength my stay.'

We look forward to seeing you.

David Green

CONTENTS:

- GOD'S WORKMANSHIP** — from 'Windows of truth' by Peter Jeffery **PAGE 1**
- AREN'T CHRISTIANS NARROW MINDED?** from 'it makes sense' Stephen Gaukroger **PAGE 2**
- THE RADAR TRAP** — from 'Windows of truth' by Peter Jeffery **PAGE 2**

GOD'S WORKMANSHIP

How do we become Christians? The popular notion is that we do so by trying our best. Salvation is therefore a reward for our efforts. The Bible says, 'No, this is not true.' Salvation is not the result of our works (Eph. 2:8-9), it is the result of God's work. The Christian is God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10).

This simple illustration tells us so much we need to know about salvation. A workman needs three things — raw material to work from, tools to work with and a design to work to.

I knew a man who was highly skilled and clever. He could do almost anything with a piece of wood, and his shed was full of all sorts of bits and pieces that he would never throw away because they might come in handy one day. There was one beautiful piece of teak that he always said he was keeping for a special job. It was so much better than the other wood he had and too good for most jobs. So with this workman, as with most, his raw material varied. Some was excellent,

some not so good.

God's raw material has no special pieces. It is all rubbish. The raw material of human nature is so twisted and warped by sin, so full of flaws and knots that it would take a workman of infinite skill to do anything with it. God is such a workman. There is no raw material that God cannot fashion into a thing of beauty. That truth gives every sinner hope.

As God begins to work on this raw material, his main tool is the Scripture. As the Word is preached, the Holy Spirit begins the vital work of conviction. The hammer of God's law, the screwdriver of conviction and the plane of divine mercy to take off the rough edges, all do their work. Another tool is circumstance. A sickness, a chance meeting, an unexpected happening can all be used to show the sinner his need of salvation.

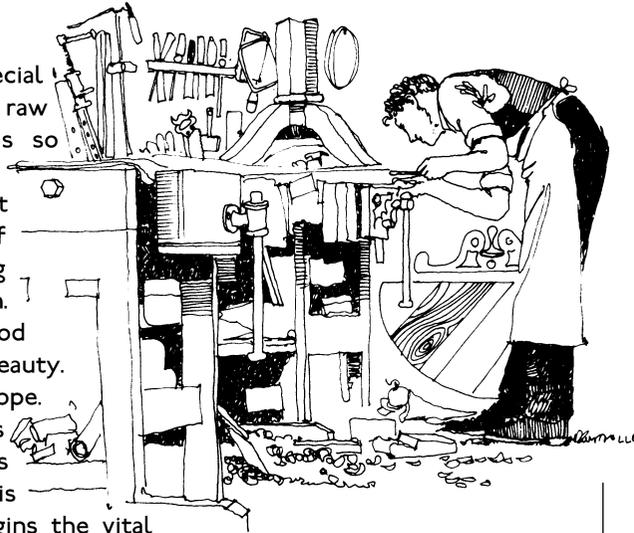
The design that God is working to is to make us like Jesus — to change our vile nature so that we radiate something of the beauty of Jesus. Only God can do this. Only God can make a Christian.

A Christian is not a patched-up sinner, he is a new creation. God does something in him so wonderful that the change cannot be explained in any other terms than that this person is God's workmanship.

AREN'T CHRISTIANS NARROW MINDED?

Yes, it has to be admitted that some Christians are locked into a series of petty rules and regulations that have more to do with tradition than the teaching of Jesus. But if you mean that the teaching of Christianity seems narrow and restrictive (e.g. 'sex outside of marriage is wrong') then a couple of things need to be said.

Firstly, these seeming restrictions aren't half as narrow from the inside as they appear from the outside. When I first went to the House of Commons, I was shown round to what appeared to be a side entrance. This door was so narrow that you had to enter in single file. It was so unimposing! Do our MP's really meet in a poky old house? Once you get in, the change is remarkable. Majestic archways, huge halls and miles of corridors. From the outside - small and unimpressive, from the inside - huge and spacious. Similarly, when we become Christians the teaching which looked so restrictive is in fact quite different. Christians don't feel restricted by the Bible's teaching about sex - its very narrowness gives real security to marriage and the freedom to develop a meaningful sex life with a permanent partner you can trust.



When you contrast this with the broad teaching of our permissive society, we are beginning to discover that this 'freedom' means a freedom to break up someone else's marriage, cheapen relationships, hurt members of our own family, bring up a child alone. . . the list of hurts this freedom has caused could go on and on. Not to mention the freedom to get VD, herpes or AIDS! Compared with all this the Christian's narrowness seems a pretty good deal!

Secondly, sometimes narrow-mindedness is just wisdom with a different hat on. Why don't we stop being so narrowminded about our driving habits? 'How dare they restrict our freedom like this! Drive on any side of the road you want to, stop on green, go on red; when you next go south on the motorway, use the northbound carriageway. This is your right!' Of course, if you choose to exercise your right you will soon be dead right!

We all know that these rules, although we may resent them at times, are for our own safety and the safety of fellow travellers. Christians see God's rules in the same way - for our protection and best interest, not to cramp our style.

THE RADAR TRAP

The coach sped down the road carrying its passengers on their day trip to the seaside. The driver chatted to those sitting near the front, pointing out interesting landmarks. After a while it was noticed that the drivers of lorries and coaches coming towards us were giving our driver the thumbs-down sign.

He knew what it meant. There was a police radar speed trap ahead, so he noticeably slowed down.

Sure enough, we soon saw a policeman standing at the roadside with a radar gun in his hand. We passed him well within the speed limit. As soon as we were past, our speed increased and our driver began to give the thumbs down sign to lorries and coaches coming towards him.

The policeman would not have caught many lawbreakers that day. The law was politely adhered to only for as long as necessary and in effect the law-enforcer was laughed at.

There is a law and a law-enforcer who is not so easily fooled. God's law may be broken a thousand times by man, but he is never fooled. The Bible calls breaking God's law 'sin', and God declares most positively, 'be sure that your sin will find you out' (Num. 32:23).



There is a day of reckoning coming when we must all give an account for our sin to the divine law-enforcer. What fools we are to think that we can trick the omniscient God!

He sees all and knows all. No sin is hidden from his sovereign eye. But thank God that he is not only the law-enforcer, but also a